

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 INR-10 CIAE-00 PM-09 L-03

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 SS-14 NSC-10 ACDA-19 /123 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/ SOV: JKADILIS: CR

X-23350 3/30/73

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R 021601 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL MILAN

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E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PFOR UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS COMMENTS ON ATHENS REGIME

REF: ATHENS 1859, MOSCOW 3525

1. WE HAVE NOT CHECKED THE OTHER ITEMS, BUT THE PRAVDA
PIECE BY N. BRAGIN ON MARCH 25 IS UNMISTAKABLY NEGATIVE
ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CURRENT GREEK REGIME. THE
ARTICLE, ENTITLED " UNSUBDUED HELLAS," BEGINS BY NOTING
THE WARM AND FRIENDLY FEELINGS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN
THE SOVIET AND GREEK PEOPLE. THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS THAT
THE TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLE IS
CENTURIES- OLD. AS EXAMPLES OF THIS FRIENDSHIP HE
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CITES THE DECISIVE ROLE PLAYED BY RUSSIA IN FREEING GREECE FROM THE OTTOMAN YOKE DURING THE REVOLUTION OF 1821; THE FACT THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE WARMLY WELCOMED THE GREAT OCTOBER REVOLUTION, AND THAT GREECE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BALKAN GOVERNMENTS TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVIET UNION IN 1924; THE DECISIVE ROLE PLAYED AGAIN, THIS

TIME BY SOVIET TROOPS WORKING WITH GREEK PARTISANS, IN FREEING GREECE FROM THE FASCIST OCCUPATION IN WORLD WAR II.

2. THE SOVIET COMMENTATOR HAS NO WARM FEELINGS FOR THE PRESENT GREEK GOVERNMENT. HE WRITES THAT AFTER THE MILITARY COUP IN APRIL 1967, THE CONSTITUTION WAS

DECLARED VOID, THE PARLIAMENT WAS DISSOLVED, POLITICAL PARTIES AND PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATIONS WERE PROHIBITED AND THOUSANDS OF DEMOCRATS WERE PUT INTO JAIL AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS. THE AUTHOR NOTES THAT EVEN AFTER MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE FREED, MANY OTHERS REMAIN IN JAIL CONDEMNED BY EXTRAORDINARY MILITARY TRIBUNALS.

3. MR. BRAGIN THEN PROCEEDS TO ATTACK GREECE'S ALIGNMENT WITH NATO. HE STATES THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE ARE DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THE ATLANTIC POLICY OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, AND THE FACT THAT THE REGIME HAS MADE AVAILABLE THE TERRITORY OF GREECE TO THE WAR-MONGERING CIRCLES OF NATO. IN THAT CONNECTION, THE AUTHOR ATTACKS THE HOMEPORTING OF THE SIXTH FLEET IN GREECE. THE ATTACK IS SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL IN ITS ASSERTION THAT "NO POST-WAR GREEK GOVERNMENT HAS DARED TAKE SUCH A STEP, NOR DID THEY DARE TO DO SO WHEN GREECE WAS IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE AND THE MARSHALL PLAN."

4. THE WRITER GOES ON TO SAY THAT THERE ARE INCREASINGLY LOUDER VOICES WHICH SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEADLY PATH CHOSEN BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT, AND DEMAND THAT IT PARTICIPATE IN THE RELAXATION OF TENSIONS IN EUROPE, CONTRIBUTE TO PREPARATIONS FOR AN ALL-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE, AND REFUSE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF THE MOST RELIABLE EXECUTOR OF THE MILITARISTIC PLANS OF THE NATO HAWKS WHICH ARE ALIEN TO GREECE'S NATIONAL INTERESTS.

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5. THE ARTICLE ENDS ON POSITIVE NOTE-- ON THE DAY OF THE

GREEK NATIONAL HOLIDAY, THE SOVIET PEOPLE PROCLAIM THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH THE FREEDOM- LOVING PEOPLE OF HELLAS AND EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY COME TRUE. " WE ARE FIRMLY CONVINCED," ASSERTS THE WRITER, " THAT THE TRADITIONAL GRECO- SOVIET FRIENDSHIP NOT ONLY HAS A RICH PAST, BUT A GREAT FUTURE AS WELL."

6. WE FIND NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THE POSITIVE NOTE STRUCK BY THE SOVIET COMMENTATOR AS REGARDS GRECO- SOVIET FRIENDSHIP. HE IS VERY CAREFUL TO DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AND SOVIET FEELINGS ABOUT GRECO- SOVIET FRIENDSHIP. THIS APPARENT AMBIVALENCE IS NOT UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THE SOVIET WORLD VIEW. GREEK- SOVIET OFFICIAL RELATIONS ARE CORRECT AND THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THEM THAT WAY, BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE GREEK GOVERNMENT INTERPRETING THE PRAVDA ARTICLE AS PART OF A NEW SOVIET OVERTURE.

7. WE CONCUR IN EMBASSY MOSCOW' S ANALYSIS. RUSH

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR UR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE060077
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JKADILIS: CR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730430/aaaahgqv.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 ATHENS 1859, 73 MOSCOW 3525
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <17-Sep-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971112
Subject: SOVIET PRESS COMMENTS ON ATHENS REGIME
TAGS: PFOR, US, n/a
To: ATHENS
MILAN
MOSCOW
NATO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005